C M 302 175 their hair but rather pull out all the hair on the fore part of their heads, about four fingers in width. And some of the Mataguayes tear out the hair from the center of their heads, forming a sort of crown, which is why they are called "coronados" ["crowned ones"--Translator]; the Mataguayes Churumatas, on the other hand, have the same coiffure as the Tobas and Mocobíes.

C M 175 72 [266] "While the men, at nighttime, occupy themselves with roasting the flesh of their enemies over a fire in order to give them a rational grave in their brutish bellies, the old crones, who are mostly witches and are venerated as priestesses, are usually present and sing all or most of the night of victories over their enemies or doleful songs about the dead. But if they have had bad fortune in war not a word is heard on their return in all the hamlets or villages which had a part in the misfortune, a strict silence being observed as a sign of sadness and all is attributed to sundry omens. They continue in this melancholia for some days until, little by little, they start to forget and begin to come out of their shacks. Then the relatives of the dead begin to incite the others to vengeance; and it is an inviolable law that those relatives are to lead the others, exposing themselves to the greatest dangers; but they are not to return to the place in which they suffered the defeat because, as they imagine, if they fight there they will certainly be overcome once more.

C M 175 [241] [273] "They do not grow crops but live entirely on what they hunt and fish, to which end they wander through the forests and along the rivers. On returning home the common thing is to get drunk with wine which they make from wild honey or from the pods of the algarrobo. Their drunkenness lasts until they run out of provisions at which time they sally forth once more. If they should have a free moment they devote it to making weapons for war. Some of them, such as the Mocobíes and Aguilotes eat, in addition to what they hunt and fish, roasted or boiled locusts. In all other things the men of every one of these Indian nations make the women work for them, and this is quite hard for they (the women) must cut firewood and take it home on their shoulders even if they are also suckling a child. They must also fetch water from the river. In all things the men are hard on their women, to the extent that when on the road the husband will ride a horse while the wife and young child [578] must go afoot. Nor is the mother more tender towards her child for as soon as it can use its legs she makes it walk so that she may carry the dog, who keeps them company, in her

415 "The best pieces of equipment of which they can boast are
923 some small vessels of "palo santo" [lignum vital—a kind of wood--Translator] and a few small clay pots with very narrow mouths and two little handles which serve them as water flasks on their frequent raiding forays."

"Men and women alike shave their heads completely. They
302 use, for that purpose, the sharp jaw of a certain fish, and their own teeth serve them to pare their nails. They cover themselves as best
291 they are able from their waists to their knees. The men, on gala
286 occasions, often wear a sort of sleeveless jacket and hang a kind of
415 bag from one shoulder in which they keep a crude wooden pipe, fire
[276] making equipment and other nicknacks. Both the bag and the coat are knitted, made from agave or chaguar fiber, and curiously marked.
302 They pull out their beards, eyelashes and eyebrows, and either to improve their looks or in order to appear more terrible in battle, they blacken their faces and chests with coal dust."

"Their favorite food is fish, and lacking this, all kinds of wild
262 fruits or roots other than the poisonous ones. Their principal vegetable food, on which they can count for a quarter of each year and which they store to some small extent, is the fruit of the algarrobo, chañar and mistol. They also eat, and that without repugnance, lizards, locusts, crickets [593], mice, and even eggs after they have been abandoned, together with other filth. They eat fish and any other kind of meat
[252] or roots, roasted or boiled, and know of no other way of preparing food.
[261] They can withstand hunger admirably, and when they are unable to get other food they spend their time lying about chewing some herb or leaf from the forest."

"From the algarroba [pod which grows on the algarrobo tree--
● 273 Translator] they make a beverage which is extremely delicious to their
579 taste and which intoxicates them and makes them very fierce. Their drunken parties almost always end in a fierce fight which would have dire results were it not that the women, who never drink of that liquor, are careful to hide the arrows and all other offensive weapons and to hold back and separate those engaged in fighting."

"When the algarroba starts to turn yellow, they place in a cen-
533 222 tral place among the huts, the pimpin, which is a log, concave at its upper end, covered with a piece of hide. A drummer with a belt about

411 "Their weapons comprise arrows, spear and club, and those who cannot procure iron spears attach a sharp piece of deer antler to
721 the end of a pole. Their occupations are limited to a little hunting;
262 to fishing, to which end in some places they customarily make nets of
[227] garabata fiber; to gathering a few wild fruits, and to loafing. For this reason their food consists of a little meat from the wild animals they hunt, fish and fruits. These latter they gather abundantly during some months of the year, although the variety is limited mainly to the fruit of the chañar, mistol, and algarrobo. Fish is also plentiful in certain seasons. Game, on the other hand, is relatively scarce but they eat anything which is in any way similar to meat with relish, such as small lizards, crickets, locusts and mice (1) so that although

1. That is: cavies, which are very good to eat when fat (J.P.)

they do get rather thin in certain months by reason of the scarceness
231 of food, no one dies of starvation. Some, but [600] very few, raise sheep and other domestic animals. In any event, when times are hard, and even when they are not so hard, the frontier Christians have pretty large cattle herds, herds which often help the Matacos out when food is scarce, and this with little effort. Most of them refrain from
241 agricultural pursuits because that would involve too much work (in the Mataco opinion), except for some perfunctory sowing of pumpkins which grow with astonishing ease in those parts and in such abundance and such high quality that some frontier people, with a little exaggeration, used to tell me that they were so delicious that it was a pleasure to see and taste them and that their honey-like sweetness was such that when one wished to cut one open the knife would become stuck fast in them. I observed that while these people were telling me about the pumpkins their mouths would begin to water, so much so that I was almost persuaded to go off and live in those places where such delicious and mellifluous pumpkins grew and multiplied so easily."

273 "From wild fruits and even from pumpkins and watermelons they
579 make a fermented beverage which they like very much but which intoxicates them powerfully; and in their fury they join in some very bloody frays. This is why the women abstain completely from drinking that beverage and hide their husbands' weapons during those periods

273 when the drink excites them too much and infuriates them. In this
579 way many wounds and deaths are avoided, yet in spite of it they are frequent."

273 "The fruit which they most commonly use to make their brews
221 is the algarrobo pod, which is quite sweet and nutritious and probably the most abundant fruit in those regions. When the season for this fruit is in the offing it would seem that new life, happiness and pleasure are born, and the Indians prepare for it by putting on a show to get everyone to make ready for the coming of the happy and much sighed for season."

222 "To this effect, when the pods of the algarrobo start to turn
533 yellow they place a wooden mortar in front of their dwellings, and
789 cover it with a half tanned sheep skin or the skin of some other animal. One of them, with a piece of cord or leather thong bound about his waist from which hang a number of shells, horns and small bones, and other things which will make a little noise, starts [601] to pound with a small stick on the mortar, which they call pimpin and which takes the place of a drum. This drummer accompanies the blows dealt to the pimpin with divers body movements, half dancing but rooted to the spot, in such a manner that the objects which hang from his waist make a tambourine-like sound, something like the rattling of empty nutshells; singing meanwhile out loud but in a sad monotonous way—one would say that they fear some great calamity or are asking for help in a grim battle. The fact of the matter is that day and night, without ceasing, the low hollow sounds of the pimpin must be made, together with the rattling of the wild tambourine and the shouts or lamentations of the sorrowful singer—and all this they say is to bring about the quicker and better ripening of the desired fruit. That is why, when the singer-musician tires, another immediately replaces him.

342 "The houses of the Matacos are altogether too small and uncomfortable, but they make them so on purpose for they are thus able to husband time and fatigue, preferring ease in building to living comfort. They cut a couple of saplings or thin branches, bend them and stick the ends into the ground in the form of two crossed arches, tie a few handsful of straw to them and the house is finished. The entrance is low and narrow and one must enter on all fours. The appearance of the hut is that of an oven two or three yards in diameter. If the cutting of a few boughs looms difficult to them, then they cut several canes,

At a wedding which is properly celebrated with all the attendant frills there are alcoholic beverages made from the pods of the algarrobo and vinal, and from forest honey -- regarding all of which I shall write in the following chapter. 273 585

Chapter VI

Fermented Beverages

Natural Products of Domestic Use

The algarrobo is to these parts what the chestnut tree is to Europe in its usefulness to the people who live in the region. By observation I have found that it grows in the area between one hundred and four hundred meters above sea level and between 30° and 15° of southern latitude, between the mountains and the sea. It does not like dampness, which keeps it from growing even in those places which would otherwise suit it. In dry, hot places I have come upon it even at an elevation of seven hundred meters above sea level, but always in flat country. 137

The algarrobo is found in various situations. Sometimes there are whole forests of this tree only; sometimes it grows in company with others. In my judgment it is the most widely distributed tree in the region and deserves, for this reason, and because of its great importance to have a whole area or forest zone named after it. It is to be found, in fact, growing both in forests rooted in earth built up out of the waters when these lands were raised, and in alluvial soil recently washed down.

The wood of the algarrobo is ideal for most construction purposes (except for roofing) and carpentry, but usually has the drawback of being short. There oozes from the trunk a black resin for which we have no use but the Indians do. The fruit is in the shape of a pod and contains a somewhat sweet flour which is used to make bread and fermented drinks. 137 824

There are in the region three types of algarrobo: the white kind which has pods in color and size similar to our white beans, from which a good beverage is made and the flour of which could be used. The black kind with pods like black eyed peas from which an inferior

drink is made; and the so-called [187] "patay" algarrobo whose pods, 137
like our white beans, are thick and produce a large amount of ex- 824
cellent flour with which bread -- called patay in the Quechua language --
is made. The first two have simple compound leaves, that is, each
leaf is made up of pairs of leaflets placed evenly along its axis, with
small thorns at the base of each leaf. The third type of algarrobo has
complex-compound leaves in which the secondary leaflets are sub-
divided into many pairs of almost microspoic ones, as occurs in the
churqui (Acacia cavenia), and also has thorns between ten and fifteen
centimeters long, though not large in girth.

In order to make patay (bread) which is only made in Santiago 252
and Catamarca in the basin of the Pueblos de Belen, the dry algarrobo
pod, ready for grinding, is placed under a hardwood or stone pestle
which is moved by a long lever. The pod, thus ground, is turned
into flour, but the seeds, which are extraordinarily hard, do not even
break. The flour is then sifted, poured and pressed into a pot which
has been previously heated by being put out in the sun or near a fire.
The pot is now sealed off with fine sand and then again placed in the
sun or near a fire for a short while. In ten minutes the patay is ready,
for the warming has no other object than to melt the honey contained
in the flour in order to make it coalesce into a lump, this lump be-
coming very hard once the honey cools. Thus they make loaves
weighing from four to six pounds and more, which can be packed
into saddlebags, slung over the saddle and afford a delicious if some-
what cloying food. The flour is in some ways similar to chestnut
flour. A slice of this, impaled on a knife and heated in the fire is
a really superb tidbit, both in smell and in taste. Aloja is the 273●
Argentine (1) name given to the fermented beverages of that region,

1. Cacan (?) Ed.

while in Quechua they are called chicha (2), in Mataco; hŭ-nă;

2. Chicha is made from corn. Ed. --
See: Acca and Asua. [?--Translabor]

in Mocovi: nẵ-nă and nănn-nă; and in Vilela: tsŭc-cuĕ.

In order to make this beverage, in Perũ as well as among the savage Indians, the usual thing is to chew a part of the raw-material which is then mixed in with the rest. This smaller chewed portion acts as a leavening since saliva, as we know, contains diastase, found also in the cotyledons of seeds, which converts starches into glucose or grape sugar and so makes them soluble in water and fermentable, thus producing alcohol. The Indian knows nothing about all this but being as he is a keen observer he has discovered the effect of this chewing operation, so nauseous to the whites who see it practiced.

This same process was used in China in the making of [188] bread and in the East Indies in the preparation of fermented beverages. In our own midst, who is unaware of the custom indulged in by nurses and mothers of chewing the baby's food before giving it a spoonful of it? In spite of the lack of knowledge on the part of those who do this and of its foolishness and repulsiveness in the eyes of those who see it done, this custom has a very useful end, and science puts its seal upon it.

One often sees wooden and earthenware receptacles in the Indian dwellings into which people spit the pods which they have chewed during the day. In addition to this women and children, at certain hours, set to and break and chew pods, and the small children have a great time grabbing handfuls of pods in their fat little hands, cramming them into their mouths and spitting them over and over again into the pots. Often the grownups also gather there and then the preparation of aloja is an occasion for fun. The unchewed portion is ground in a mortar, which is always made of yuchan, a tree about which I shall make some comment later. The whole lot is then passed into a mortar made of a single trunk of that same tree and water is mixed into it immediately in quantity enough to make two or three barrels of aloja at a time.

Twelve hours later the aloja is ready. It has a bitter-sweet taste and is yellowish in color. Its sharp tang makes it pleasant to the palate. I prefer it in the Chaco to any other drink, including wine itself. Taken in quantity it inebriates, but the drunkenness soon passes and leaves no hangover. At least that is the way in which I have seen it affect others.

The season for the ripening of the algarrobo pods coincides with 824
that of the vinal, which is not so good in quality but which can be used

in making aloja. The chañar ripens before the other two mentioned above and is a sweetish, round, rather small yellow fruit with a stone, which is eaten either raw or cooked. From this fruit arrope is made, which is good tasting and has, in local opinion, medicinal qualities for the treatment of coughs and asthma. The chañar tree, while it is young, has leaves and trunk similar to the tamarind; the branches look like those of the eucalyptus. 824

Shortly after the algarrobo pods comes the mistol which is similar to our azufaifo except for this difference: from a mixture of its fruits with algarrobo pod flower, patay is made, and kept in skins and well kneaded. Together with these fruits, sometimes a little earlier, sometimes a little later, all the other fruits ripen -- in the Chaco in the hottest months which are October and December (spring and summer months) and further south, towards Tucumán, in November and February.

Through certain techniques of preservation the Indians are able to prolong the yearly period during which they can feed on this vegetable diet, particularly if the crop has been a good one. The harvest lasts between four and five months and is a time of carnival for the Indians [189]. 251

To preserve the algarrobo pods they build small huts which they place on four posts in order to supply them with proper ventilation and to keep them free of ants and other insects. It is a pleasure to see these little constructions rising above the Indians' huts in the same manner as do our towers. Each camp takes pleasure in having more of these little granaries than do its neighbors. In the same manner do they keep vinal and some roots and fruits which can and should be cooked when dry. 343

When the aloja is ready, which is usually at eleven in the morning, all the men gather about the yuchan container, seated in the Moorish fashion. Then, with two or three long-handled dry gourds they dip out the liquid and pass it around to each other. Meanwhile they talk about their affairs: about wars, the crops, news, odd bits of scandal, and guffaw at any strange happening or quid pro quo. Thus they continue for three, four or more hours. When the liquor is finished they fall upon the solid matter remaining. The women and children take no part in any of this. 273 ● [521]

They set a high value on the algarrobo pod. A famous chief, whom the whites called Granadero (Grenadier guard -- Translator) 824

137

used industrially, the yuchan and the châguar (which has fiber serviceable in making rope) [192] as they are to be found over an enormous territory and grow without need of cultivation, would be of great commercial value.

Another interesting tree that has domestic use and may some day be employed industrially is the pacara (Enterolobium timboiva). It is a tree of great beauty, very tall, of large girth and having a great deal of foliage -- it is of the mimosa family. Its fruit is a flat, oblong, twisted pod of a dark chestnut color about an inch and a half long and which contains 12 percent to 15 percent of saponin. This pod is used [388] to get the grease out of clothes and wool.

To finish as we had started, I must add that the Indians are great 273 lovers of the alcoholic beverages common among the whites, and become so drunk as to be floored. Even in this detail are they like those who are not their brothers in Christ.

Chapter VII

Wars

The Indians are much addicted to wars, it must be confessed, 721 and they are perpetually fighting; it is -- if I may be allowed the expression -- a continual giving and taking.

One war follows another, either because the vanquished wish to avenge their previous losses or because the victors have begun to enjoy their victories. Causes for war are: having fished, hunted or harvested in foreign territory, or the need to annul an offence or the hope of gain.

These wars are not strategic ones in which one battle follows another until the enemy is helpless to defend himself; rather are they surprise attacks on camps with the object of overwhelming and pillaging them and carrying off cattle, boys and sometimes even women.

This is why the camps or villages, in forested regions, always 361 have flanks and back right up against the deep woods, where, if surprised, the inhabitants may find refuge, and where it would be impossible to pursue them as there is a veritable labyrinth of paths known only to the inhabitants of the village.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

132 the annual rainfall is more abundant and the temperature more equable,
we meet with a luxuriant vegetation and almost impenetrable virgin
137 forests. When we pass eastwards this picture gradually changes. Open grass-covered plains dotted with fan palms (*Copernicia cerifera*), which in some places form real palm-groves, are varied by patches of arid deserts with lonely cactuses or with patches of forest, mostly composed of small and scrubby trees which sometimes seem almost impassable by man or beast. Occasionally, however, large forest trees are found. Among these the *Guayacan* (*Caesalpina melanocarpa*), the *Quebracho* (*Quebrachia Lorentzii*), and the *Palo santo* or holywood are well known as fine timber trees. Their iron-hard wood to a certain extent compensates the Chaco Indians for the complete lack of stone in their country, their most important weapons and implements being made of these
134 kinds of wood. It is a remarkable fact that in the pampas regions of the Chaco not the smallest stone can be found within an area of hundreds of square miles; the soil is entirely composed of fine-grained silt, with occasional layers of sand.

262 From an alimental point of view the most common and at the same time most valuable tree is the *algaroba* (*Prosopis alba or juliflora*), which
●273 forms real forests. Its pod-like fruit, which is extremely rich in sugar, is very nourishing and in fact feeds thousands of Indians for two or three months of the year. Of this fruit moreover the natives brew their favourite national drink, the algaroba beer, which plays an important part in their social and religious life. Other wild trees of great nutritive value are the *tusca* (*Acacia aroma*), the *chañar* (*Gourlica decortitans*), and the *mistol* (*Sieyphus mistol*), from which also intoxicating fermented drinks are prepared.

314 A plant which is quite common in the thickets of the Chaco and which is very useful, although extremely troublesome to the traveller because of its long thorns, is the *caraguatá* plant (*Bromelia serra*). It is from the fibres of this plant that the Indians twine the thread of which they make their shirts, bags, nets, etc. Its edible root-stocks are also useful.

132 It is the scarcity of rain that stamps the vegetation in the interior of the Chaco, just as it exerts its influence upon the culture of the natives. Thus agriculture can be practised only in a very limited degree. A real rainy season scarcely exists, but the period when rainfalls are more common than at other times of the year — from October to March — is called »summer» in the Chaco. Owing to prolonged rains in the moun-

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI? Mataco SI7
Toba S/12

M 177 577 to the extent that the Indian comes under the influence of the whites and gets «civilized», to that extent also he loses the virtue of honesty, as he loses many other virtues characteristic of him while he is in a state of nature. This again is chiefly due to the bad example given by the whites themselves. The latter steal from one another, infringe the proprietary rights of the Indians and commit other wrongs against them. The Indians, who are on this point comparable with children, naturally think they may do the same, and their very sense of justice seems to require that the same measure as is meted to them by the whites, they may themselves measure to the latter again.

M 273 578 627 The only occasion when crimes may be committed among the Choroti are during the great drinking-feasts. When the Indians are intoxicated with algaroba beer they easily begin to quarrel with one another, and these quarrels in extreme cases may end in homicide. Now the Indians certainly regard a homicide committed in a state of inebriation rather as an accident than as a crime, for the algaroba beer is sacred and an Indian inebriated by it is looked upon as possessed by a spirit and not in the ordinary sense responsible for his acts. But the Indians are anxious to prevent such accidents and this is above all the task of the women, who never themselves drink any intoxicating-drinks. On two occasions I witnessed quarrels arising during the drinking-feasts. In one case an Indian, when excessively drunk, got mad and seized his bow and arrow to shoot another Indian on account of some old controversy. Immediately the women took hold of him, deprived him of his weapons, and compelled him to leave the scene of the feast and the whole village. He in fact left for an other village in the vicinity and remained absent for several days, when he was allowed to return to his home. The minds of the two adversaries were then perfectly tranquillized and there was no more grudge between them. In the other case also the women intervened and seized the weapons from the quarrelling men to prevent fights and manslaughter. It is usual in such cases that the offending party is sent away from the village or «exiled» for some time.

T 674 Among the more advanced *Tobas* thefts occasionally take place, but there is a question whether this phenomenon is not due to the influence of the whites, since the Tobas have on the whole been more in contact with civilization than the Choroti. In the case of smaller thefts there is no T 685 public punishment among the Tobas; the affair is left to the private concern of the person robbed and the thief. In more serious cases the Council

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

The Tobas call the spirit *peyák noin* or *nõtta*,[1]) the Mataco *aittáh slahsa is*, the Choroti *mõhsek eis*, and the Ashluslay *sitché is*. The spirit is thus identical with the vital power or the principle of life in the plants, just as the spirit or spiritual power which animates man is the principle of life and growth in the human body. The same belief is held of cultivated plants such as the pumpkin, maize, manioc, and the water melon. Of these the Tobas at any rate appreciate the water melon most, because from this fruit, just as from the fruits of the wild plants, they brew an intoxicating drink of mysterious power.

The most important of the forest trees is the algaroba, the value of which from an alimental point of view has already been mentioned. The algaroba season begins in November and lasts until the end of January, and is therefore impatiently awaited by the natives, and they try to »hurry on» its coming by various magical means. The Mataco and the Choroti, for instance, are in the habit of beating the drum every night for about one month previous to the commencement of the »season», in order, as they say, to expel the evil demons who prevent the fruit from reaching maturity, but also with a view to directly influencing the spirit (*aittáh* or *mõhsek*) which is believed to animate the tree. During the »season» the drum — at any rate among the Choroti — is beaten even in the day-time. Thus, it is believed, the trees will be influenced to continue producing fruit in abundance. The Tobas again, perform a special dance with the same object, beginning some time before the fruit ripens and continuing this ceremonial dance during the whole algaroba season.

But the Chaco Indians not only appreciate the algaroba and other fruits as *food*, but above all because of the *intoxicating drinks* they prepare from them. We should know little of the religion of these Indians if we did not know the religious ideas associated with these sacred drinks and the drinking-feasts, which in the summer months form perhaps the most salient feature of their social life.

The magical power which is commonly ascribed to intoxicating drinks is, according to Indian belief, due to the very spirit which animates the plant and is specially present in its fruit. The plant spirit reaches its highest point of actuality and concentration when the drink brewed from its fruit has fermented, for fermentation is to the Indian

[1]) *Nõtta* (= *noin'ta*) is a comparative form of the word *nóin*, 'good', but is generally used by the Bolivian Tobas in a positive sense. The Argentine Tobas, on the other hand, more commonly use the word *noin*.

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

273
776

mind a mysterious and sacred thing. To be intoxicated by the drink is therefore equal to being internally filled with a spirit or spiritual power, and this »good spirit» will, they believe, protect the intoxicated person against supernatural evils of every kind. Thus the Tobas are wont to say of such a person that he has a *peyák nõtta nãppihe*, i.e. a good spirit or *peyák* in the brain (or more strictly speaking, in that special part of the brain which is nearest to the forehead), and other Chaco tribes have exctly the same idea. This is the true reason why the Indians celebrate every important and critical incident, birth and death, the puberty of girls, marriage, warfare, etc., among other things with excessive drinking of some fermented beer. The spirit is present in different liquors in different degrees according to the strength they possess. The best beer, in the opinion of all Indians, is the algaroba beer, because it is the strongest of all. Next to this, the Choroti and Mataco appreciate the beer brewed from the tusca and chañar most, whereas the Tobas prefer the beer made of *sandia* or water-melon. From the fruit of the tusca and the chañar the Tobas only rarely brew intoxicating drinks. Similarly maize beer, which plays such an important part in the religious mysteries of the Avas and of many other South American peoples, is not unknown to the Chaco Indians, but is less appreciated than other kinds of beer, since maize is but little cultivated by them.

The idea that a spirit resides in the fermented drink — an idea which is encountered among many South American tribes [1]) — is of course connected with the belief that the very state of ecstasy or exaltation into which a man falls when intoxicated by such a drink is of mysterious or supernatural origin. But there are different kinds of religious ecstasy, and all of them are not inspired by good spirits but some by demons. The spirit of the drink naturally manifests its character in the effects it produces in the person intoxicated by it. The Mataco, who have been most in contact with the whites, say that in their own algaroba beer there is an *aittáh slahsa is* (a good spirit), in the brandy of the whites, on the other hand, an evil and destructive demon. Consequently, when the whites get drunk on their brandy and begin to fight, the Mataco say that they are inspired by demons, and at their great »carnival» — which in Bolivia is usually celebrated amidst orgies and fights — they say, many *aittáh tavakai* (evil spirits) are moving about. It is the same

[1]) See my *Beiträge zur Sittengeschichte der südamerikanischen Indianer* (*Acta Academiae Aboënsis*. Humaniora. I: 4), the chapter »Berauschende und narkotische Getränke».

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI2
Chorot SK6

with the Indian himself: when intoxicated by brandy he gets mad and is always ready for fights and outrages; on the other hand, his own native beers comparatively seldom have such bad effects. As a rule they render him happy and joyful, virile and courageous, and make him forget the troubles and hardships of life. This is the reason why, to the Indian mind, there is a *good* deity or spirit residing in the native algaroba beer. But since this deity in the first place inspires the Indian with *virile* qualities, the drinking of this as well as of most other intoxicating drinks is strictly limited to the men. Women never drink algaroba beer, except perhaps some very old women who are freed from the restrictions normally laid upon the weaker sex.

The great drinking-feasts of the Chaco Indians during the »season» will be described later on, as also the ceremonies with which the sacred drinks are prepared.

When the Chaco Indians speak of their »good spirits», however, they generally mean spirits of another kind. The medicine-men as a rule speak of these spirits in the singular, meaning thereby a mysterious personal guardian spirit of their own. Such a being is for instance the *peyák nõtta* of the *Toba* medicine-man, a kind of individual guardian spirit with whom the Indian has entered into a special relation and whom he asks for assistance in sickness and in every necessity. Among the Tobas all professional medicine-men and many of the older men are said to have such guardian spirits; even some of the women, who then exercise the profession of female sorcerers. The more the person in question has acquired power over his or her »good spirit», the more that person is in possession of what we should call supernatural powers. When, for instance, the medicine-man has to cure a sick person, he summons his own guardian spirit and by his aid expels the disease-demon from the patient's body. Similarly, those sorcerers who practise black or nefarious magic are able to harm their fellows only by the aid of their assistant spirits whom they invoke and who will despatch a spirit against their victim.

If a sorcerer wishes to harm another sorcerer, who of course also has his guardian spirit, or some other person in possession of such a spirit, he can do so only by fighting and vanquishing the assistant spirit of that person. This was especially made clear to me by the *Choroti* Indians. A sorcerer who wants to kill or harm such a person, I was told, invokes his own »good spirit»; this comes down from the heavens in the

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI12
Choroti SK6

M C 273 462 415

We have already seen that the most appreciated of these drinks is algaroba beer, which by the Mataco and the Choroti is called *atăs*, by the Tobas again *maplyí*. The tree itself and its fruit is called *oáh* in the Mataco and the Choroti language, in the Toba language *map*. The sacred beer is prepared with the utmost care and with certain religious or magical ceremonies. At this preparation there appears a strict division of labour between men and women. Although the women are not allowed to drink of the beer, they seemingly perform the larger part of the work. They collect the fruit in the forest, carrying it home in their large caraguatá bags, and afterwards mash it in mortars. Some old women start to chew the fruit, mixing it well with saliva, whereupon they spit it out into a goat's hide, fixed in the ground by means of sticks in such a way that it forms a sort of vessel. The goat's hide is used by the Choroti and by the Argentine Mataco, whereas the Tobas and the Bolivian Mataco use a wooden trough for the purpose. Lastly, hot water is poured over the mashed fruit.

M C 273 [462]

These preparations require nearly a whole day. The most essential thing still remains, namely the fermentation, and to effect this is a duty solely incumbent on the men, since women as a rule do not take part in conjurations. The fermentation is sacred, because it means the birth of the good spirit. Now this happens in the night, but night is the time when evil spirits move about. According to the belief of the Indians, the invisible persecutors appear in great numbers in order to prevent the birth of the good spirit and interfere with the drink so that it cannot ferment and is entirely spoiled. Therefore special precautions must be taken for the critical time. The brewing of the algaroba beer for the great festivals during the algaroba season is — especially among the primitive Choroti — a matter that concerns the whole community. Hence, at the approach of night, the men arrive from all houses with their rattle gourds, sit round the hide or trough, and begin to chant a noisy, monotonous song without words, shaking the rattles in the rhythm of their chant. This ceremony is called by the Choroti *nissammaha oáh*, by the Tobas *niapilák map*, and its most conspicuous object is to prevent the spirits from spoiling the beer. Since the new moon is believed to promote fermentation, a moonlight night is preferably chosen for the ceremony. The chant is typical of the Indian conjurations in the Chaco. It is always begun in a loud voice; then the voice gradually dies down, so that the last tones are only heard as a low and distant muttering. Thereupon they start again from the beginning, and so forth. In addi-

M C [821]

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7
Toba SI12
Choroti SK6

M T C 273

tion to the men shaking rattles, one or more Indians are beating drums and chanting. These noisy ceremonies are continued with short intervals during the whole night. When one party of Indians are tired and stop to rest for a moment, they are relieved by another party, since it is considered very important that there should be no interruption in the ceremonies; otherwise they would lose something of their effect. In the early morning the danger is believed to have passed; the fermentation has taken place, and the evil spirits have not been able to approach the drink and spoil it.

Although this negative object of the rites is particularly emphasized by the Indians, they also have a positive object which is indicated by the very expression »hurry on the fermentation». As we have already seen, the fruit of which the drink is made is believed to be animated by a spirit, and it is the same spirit that is active in the fermented, intoxicating beer. The rites described, while they are supposed to keep off evil spirits, are also intended to influence magically the plant-spirit itself and to bring it to its highest point of development, which is marked by the fermentation. This is partly effected through the chanting, the shaking of rattles, and the drumming, partly through the procedure of mixing the mashed fruit with saliva. The saliva really has the property of bringing about fermentation, and this phenomenon is explained by the superstitious Indian as due to the supernatural virtues which this secretion is believed to possess. Even the fact that only *old* women chew the fruit is probably not accidental. Old people have by nature a stronger magical power than the young and their saliva has therefore greater efficacy.

M T C [827 888]

The Chaco Indians not only try to promote the growth of the fruits by shaking rattles and drumming, but also by *dancing*. Thus the Toba dance *Nahót dónnaran* is not only performed in cases of sickness, but also with a view to »hurrying on» the chanar fruit (*niapilàk tàkkai*). Once I witnessed such a ceremony. The chañar fruit — next to the algaroba the most important of the fruits growing in the Chaco forests — reaches maturity in the month of October and forms the staple food of the Indians during that month. The dance was performed in the following way. The fruit gathered in during the day was spread out on cloths or big hides on the ground outside the houses, where they are generally laid to dry. The dance took place at night. A young man began to dance alone, stamping alternately with his feet on the ground, without using any rattle, and chanting at first in a low voice. Gradually his movements

T 789
T [262 824]
T [25-1]

2: Karsten E-5 (1911-1913)1932 SI7 Mataco SI7

Choroti SK6

M C 764 M [535]

chant the whole night, beating drums and shaking rattles, while the women from time to time utter their peculiar dirge. Similarly among the Tobas drums and rattles are at work for several nights after the death takes place. Among the Mataco dancing forms part of the death-feast, the ceremonial dance *Katináh* being performed every night for a long time. The men taking part in this ceremony have their face blackened with charcoal as a »sign of sorrow», but in reality as a protection against the death-demon. As a rule the Indians would not admit that they feared the departed soul. On the contrary, the Mataco told me that when the medicine-man beats his drum in the evening, he at the same time says to the departed soul in an insinuating voice: »May you stay here, may you not leave us!» The Choroti again, in speaking of the deceased use the stereotyped phrase: *uáhsah* (= *eis sáhe*), i. e. »he is good», although at the same time their whole behaviour clearly shows that they stand in fear of him.

M 764 ● 273

The drinking of some intoxicating liquor also forms an important part of a death-feast, and it is considered necessary that the men taking part in the drinking-bout should get more or less intoxicated. The strong algaroba beer is most appreciated, but at those times of the year when there is no algaroba the Indians have to be content with beer brewed of tusca or chañar. Only in exceptional cases do the Chaco Indians drink maize beer at their feasts. The drinking of intoxicating liquors on these occasions has a ceremonial character and is believed to fill those taking part in it with power of resistance against the disease and death-demon.

M C 783 768

The way in which the Tobas purify the village after a death is typical of the Chaco Indians. Among all Pilcomayo tribes purification is chiefly carried out by means of fire brands which are waved about in all directions in the evening of the day on which the death takes place. Similarly, the destruction of the property of the deceased, the burning of his clothes and his other belongings, the destruction of the gourds from which he has eaten and drunk and, in general, of all things with which he has been in contact, are customary among the Choroti, the Mataco, and the Ashluslay. The taboo of death is attached to them and they can no longer be used. The whole house of course particularly falls under the death taboo and is therefore always burned. But the Mataco and the Choroti are generally not content with burning the hut where the deceased lived and where he died, but as a rule destroy the whole village, considering it polluted to such extent by the contagion of death that the

3: Metraux E-5 (1933) 1939 SI7 Mataco SI7

X 539 animals and ate them raw because he had no fire to cook
X 773 them with.

In ancient times the jaguar was a woman and the rodent who stole the fire from her was a man. Later they were changed into animals.

[372] The Trickster, *Tawkxwax* put fire into the *sunchu* wood and that is why we make our fire-drills with this wood[1].

69. Origin of the Mead (Pedro)

X 539 In ancient times there was no mead. An old man tried
X 773 to make it with some honey (*nesla*). He mixed the honey
273 with water and left the mixture to ferment for one night. The next day he tasted it and found it very good. The other people did not want to taste the drink as they thought it might be poison one. The old man said. »I will drink because I am very old and if I died it would not matter.» The old man drank much of the mixture and he fell down as if dead. That night he awoke and told the people that the beer was not a poison. The men carved a larger trough (*tsemLák*) and drank all the beer they made. It was a bird who carved the first drum, he beat it all night and at dawn he was changed into a man.

70. The Arrow Bridge (Martin)

X 539 There was a very clever young man. He was good and
X 773 never did anything wrong, but people did not like him. He went away and joined some people of the old times, men who had lived long, long ago and who were very intelligent. They took him away to a city in the middle of the sea. The old men thought that the boy would never be able to leave this place, but he made a bow and some arrows. He shot first arrow into the shore opposite, then he shot a second one into the butt of the first, and then a third into the butt of

[1] The second and third part of this version has been narrated by my informant Pedro.

6:Métraux E-5 (no date) 1943 SI7 Mataco SI7

terms. Every party ends with broken limbs, smashed skulls or at least ~~avail to persuade the mother to receive her child. The missionary~~ with black and blue marks. The fact that they gamble for high stakes on the outcome contributes to the violence of the party and to the passionate ardor of the players.

Aggressiveness finds another outlet in drinking bouts. Fights are so intimately associated with these alcoholic enjoyments that, before a party begins, the chief gives a long talk in which he exhorts the men to refrain from violence and to have a good time in peace and harmony. When the men begin to get inebriated the women conceal the weapons in the bush. Despite these precautions, quarrels and fights are rather common. Men remember slights and insults delivered months before and belatedly challenge the offender. Threats are exchanged and hard words are followed by acts of violence.

Formerly, of course, suppressed bad feelings found an outlet in the practice of black magic and aggressive personalities were able to indulge in regular warfare and scalping parties.

In order to maintain discipline and to prevent violence, missionaries have prohibited hockey, drinking and, of course, witchcraft and warfare. As a result there is in modern Matako society no institutionalized means for any person to give vent to his feelings of anger and aggression. Suicide is the only way open to punish the offender.

It is possible that interest in life itself decreases as the Indian is progressively prevented from carrying on any of his former activities. In addition, he is faced with increasingly difficult economic problems. The struggle for life is harsher and the conditions more humiliating. The Indians are well aware that they are the underdogs.

In a general way, we may say that the Matako have no resilience. They are abused, down trodden by the whites but rarely revolt. They accept their lot with abject resignation. Why should they bother, is their attitude; since the white man has come it has always been the same. Missionaries say that they rarely resist temptation; a man who for years has been a good Christian, "sins" at the first opportunity. Moreover, the Matako are decidedly unaquisitive; they give away for trifles the very objects for which they have worked for months in the sugar cane factories. They do not even bother to increase their small herds. Such indifference to possessions increases with old age. An old man asked, "Why should I bother to get more goats, since I am about to die? This behavior undoubtedly carries over from the past when the property of the dead was destroyed.

Nevertheless, since similar conditions prevail among other Indian groups without provoking a comparable predilection for suicide, the

/217 cont./

Ceremony for the Expulsion of Illness for the Benefit of One Person

(April 2, 1933)

755 [554] A woman being sick, she was taken care of, but as she was less rich, the ceremony had a more modest character. Opposite the sick woman's house they put up a tent under which she lay down. The offerings were only some cloths and string bags. At my arrival the medicine man was in the act of speaking with the illness, while an old woman, also a medicine woman, was singing and blowing on the sick woman. The others were talking among themselves, without appearing to be very concerned with what was going on. After an interruption, during which [273] everyone drank the wine demanded by the illness, a man began to run around the sick woman, singing, his body bent forward and his arms dangling. The chief medicine man continued to speak with the illness, while the woman blew on the sick woman and another medicine man put a certain number of covers from illustrated newspapers and 20-centavo popular novels around her head. The runner stopped and the chief medicine man began to talk with the others. Everyone sat down, drinking water, and two women began to walk rapidly around the others, singing. One of them stopped, and a little later the other did 755 the same. Then all the assistants began to dance, accompanied 763 by hiccups from the sick woman, who appeared to be getting worse and worse; in fact she died in the middle of the ceremony.

Immediately after the death the dance was stopped; the old women ran around the tent, shaking maracas and singing, while two men laid the dead woman on her right side, bending her legs and crossing (or bending) her arms over her breast. She was wrapped in the cloths on which she had been lying and [552] carried to her house. The medicine men stripped themselves [756] quietly while all the women of the village wailed the customary lamentations.

/319/

Matacos or Noctenes

M 131 648 This tribe is also very numerous; it lives on the right bank of the Pilcomayo River, occupying the part opposite the zone occupied by the Toba, with whom they maintain friendly relations which are disturbed from time to time, especially at the time when the algarrobas and other fruits ripen.

M 797 199 A group of these Indians in times past formed a part of the San Antonio del Pilcomayo Mission, where today the Chaco Delegation is located, occupying the mission buildings. But because they are as fickle, or perhaps more so, than the Toba, Religion and the State could make little progress with such Indians.

M 131 197 648 T 186 These Indians are very numerous and in small groups extend as far as the shores of the Bermejo; their language is totally different from that of the other tribes and they hardly mix, although they maintain friendly relations with the Toba, to whom they are considered to be inferior.

M 181 598 273 Their physiognomy is overly languid; sadness can be read in their faces, and they are very miserable; nevertheless they are ferocious in war, in jealousy, or in a state of drunkenness; they injure and kill one another. Out of these considerations the women refrain from drinking to the state of inebriation in order to prevent their husbands' disorders and to hide the weapons in the event of the outbreaks which frequently occur (1).

M 273 [171]

M [243]

1. In the drinking bouts they are the same as the Toba; they make a mead from the fruits of the algarroba, which is almost as intoxicating as brandy; they also make mead from other wild fruits; they do not make chicha because they hardly plant maize.

M 181 721 648 They are more peaceful Indians than the Toba, are not very warlike, and do not attack the houses of the whites but profit when they can from the latter's cattle, especially should a famine break out due to a lack of wild fruits.